

# Questions for Superintendents Around the State

*Editor's Note: The purpose of Hole Notes is to get information to MGCSA members. Some of the most important information is that from exchange between superintendents. It could be a simple idea, a complex plan or a certain philosophical approach to golf course management. In the next issue of Hole Notes, we will print questions and answers from members of the MGCSA.*

*In this issue, three superintendents were asked the same questions. Sometimes the answers will be similar but the ideas is to exchange information and perhaps learn from a fellow superintendent. A thank you to Keith Greeninger, Baker National G.C.; Jeff Backstrom, Cannon G.C., and Mary Burg, Brightwood Hills G.C.*

## **How has the role of the golf course superintendent changed in recent years?**

*Keith:* Superintendents have to delegate more of the turfgrass management responsibility and spend more time on personnel management and public relations aspects of the profession.

*Jeff:* The percentage of time spent doing hands-on maintenance has been decreasing. Increases in revenues and demand for better playing conditions have resulted in larger staffs and capital outlays. Government regulations, safety and liability, environmental concerns and public relations are issues facing superintendents every day. Therefore, education and personnel management have become an important role in the golf course superintendent's occupation.

*Mary:* As a golf course superintendent, one could once be satisfied to just maintain the turf in the highest quality. As the public has become more demanding, the golf course superintendent's image has become higher profile and the superintendent has to spend more time educating the public as to the value of the maintenance task.

In the era of environmental aware-

ness, there is a greater opportunity to share our mission of fine quality turf through the use of "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) with golf patrons as well as the general public. The result has been heightened professionalism for all of us in the field.

## **What is the procedure you use for aerifying greens, tees and fairways?**

*Keith:* Turf is fertilized 1-2 weeks prior to being aerified so it is actively growing. The greens on the championship 18 are aerified once in the spring. The course is closed while aerifying and reopened in the afternoon for league play. We use three aerifiers, two GA 60's and a Greensaire (the Greensaire does the greens with the severest slopes). The plugs are mulched with verticut reels on triplexes, dragged with a Keystone dragmat and swept with a Mars sweeper. Greens are then mowed with our oldest triplex and opened up for play. The greens are topdressed lightly twice during the next two weeks. Tees are done with the GA-30's. We do four or five each until finished. Some tees are aerified only once during the season and others two to three times. Plugs are mulched with the verticut reels or the flail mower and dragged with the Keystone mat. Fairways are done with a GA-60. We try to do two or three each day. Plugs are mulched with an Olathe core pulverizer or flail and dragged with a chain link fence.

*Jeff:* The second Monday and Tuesday in May we aerify greens and fairways, closing nine holes each day. Greens aerifiers with 5/8" hollow tines are used on greens, collars and approaches. The cores are removed with a Core Harvester and the greens are topdressed with 80/20 which is worked into the holes with a steel fabricated drag with broom heads. Greens are fertilized with 1/2 - 3/4# of nitrogen and watered in. We don't mow for three to four days and any excess sand is removed using brush reels. Fall aerifying on greens and collars is contracted out, using water

injection and fairways with a tractor mounted 3-point aerifier with 3/4" tines. Cores are broken up with a chain link fence, then a 5-gang reel mower is used once before using the fairway mower to prevent wear on the blades. Tees are not aerified on a regular program since most tees are built with 80/20 mix. I feel aerification is not needed unless problems occur.

*Mary:* At Brightwood Hills, we aerify greens two to three times per season, tees on a monthly basis. While conditions constantly change, as you well know, tasks don't always go as planned. Under normal conditions, we do as follows:

- Fertilize about one week before aerification to hit growth spurt for more rapid recovery.
- Avoid watering 24 hours prior to aeration
- Core aerify
- Remove cores
- Topdress
- Drag
- Brush drag
- Blow off any remaining debris
- Slit-seed tee areas
- Recycle cores to low or worn areas
- We close the hole we are working on and offer a discount on golf.

The best tip for time saving so far has been to hire a contractor to aerify with the Toro Hydroject which we did last fall. Results are unknown as yet.

## **What was one of the most satisfying experiences that you had on your golf course in the last two years?**

*Keith:* Nothing has happened that has been anymore satisfying than doing the day-to-day duties the position requires.

*Jeff:* The Cannon G.C. expanded to 18 holes in 1991, and with construction there seems to be many areas that need to be fine tuned. Working with a pro-active board of directors and having the flexibility to implement programs and projects to improve the course has been very gratifying. One of the most satisfying accomplishments is our tree program. We have planted over 1400 trees and shrubs to add character and wildlife habitat to our golf course.

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## Questions —

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**Mary:** The most satisfying experience in the past couple of years has been returning to a "normal" year in 1995 after experiencing the "500" year rains in 1994.

**What is the most important summer disease problem on your course and what cultural practices and fungicides do you use to combat the problem?**

**Keith:** The most important summer disease problem is the one that conditions favor at the time. During the summer we try to manage the irrigation to keep greens on the dry side

and fertilize regularly with N to keep the greens growing actively. We use a fungicide program consisting of a combination of systemic and contacts when dollar spot is noticed or when conditions are favorable for brown patch.

**Jeff:** Dollar spot is the most common disease found on our golf course. The greens are treated with fungicides on a preventive program with approximately seven applications throughout the season. During severe disease pressure we may raise the cutting heights as well as groomer heights. The fairways and tees are treated on a curative program with up to four applications of fungicides for dollar spot. During high disease pressure we will

drag hoses on fairways to remove guttation water and mow after they have dried to reduce clumping of grass clippings.

**Mary:** Our most prevalent summer disease has been dollar spot. Since I am responding to this questionnaire from a vacation in Flamingo, Fla., I would not want to give improper information. Generally, with proper fertilization, aerification and preventive pesticide application, we can keep excellent control with less work and expense.

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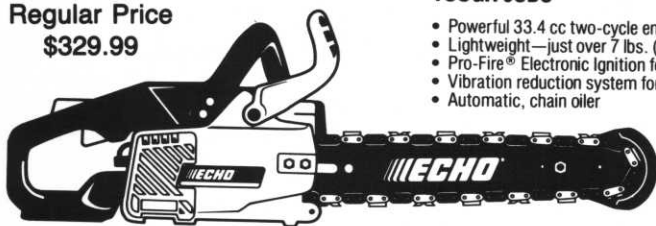
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